

# Tamara-Alexandra Goldenberg

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Moscow

Russia

Interviewer: Svetlana Bogdanova

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*Tamara Goldenberg lives in the center of Moscow in a two-room apartment of a nine-storied brick house build in the 1950s.*

*After her husband's death she lives by herself. Tamara is a slender, gray-haired woman with a weary face and wistful eyes.*

*Recently she had cervical hip fracture of the right leg, so she stays in, as she can hardly move in the apartment. She lives with her housekeeper, an employee of the Jewish charitable organization 'Yad Ezra.'*

*There is furniture in the apartment that dates back to end of the 19th/beginning of the 20th century and belonged to her mother's relatives. There are many pictures of her relatives, now deceased.*

*There are a lot of Russian and French books on the shelves, mostly fiction or pedagogical manuals. Tamara's Russian is proper and literary. She is very modest and bashful. She did not welcome the interview at once, explaining that her vita is of no interest.*

*She gave consent only after she was told that the subject of the interview would refer to her kin, and her family's history.*

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## • Family and youth

My true name is Tamara-Alexandra. I was named Tamara at birth. My mother's brother, Alexander Geftman, tragically perished in 1918, shortly after my birth. After that tragedy I was given the double name Tamara-Alexandra, and this is my original name, written in the documents. People call me Tamara.

My ancestors settled in the Crimea long before I was born. My father Jacob Goldenberg's generation lived in Simferopol [about 1350 km to the south from Moscow]. My parental great-



grandfather, Shlema Malinskiy, settled in Simferopol in 1856 after his army service in Sevastopol was over [Sevastopol is about 1430 km south of Moscow]. He was in the Black Sea Fleet [1](#) of the tsar's army during the Crimean war [2](#). By the tsar's decree Jews who had defended Sevastopol were entitled to settle in that city. [In Tsarist Russia Jews were allowed to settle only in the Jewish Pale of Settlement [3](#), apart from merchants and doctors, who were permitted to settle in larger cities too. In this case an exception was made based on military merits.] That is why my ancestors settled in the Crimea.

I kept Shlema Malinskiy's service record from 1855 in our family archive; it was obtained by my mother from the Black Sea Fleet. From the archive data I found out that my great-grandfather was born in 1811. He was drafted from the town of Ostrovtse, Volyn province. The service record says that he was a fair-haired Jew, with the height of 2 arshines and 5 vershok [Russian length measures of the 19th century: 1 arshin = 71.1 cm, 1 vershok = 4.4 cm, so his height was 164.2 cm] with light complexion and hazel eyes. He was a senior private, conferred with a silver medal with the inscription: For the Defense of Sevastopol in the period of 13 Sep 1854 - 28 Aug 1855. He did not know Russian grammar, but he was well-up in sailing, and was promoted a number of times.

As it is indicated in the service record, by the end of the military service Shlema was married to Shedva Leibova. They had a son, Avrum-Itsek, and a daughter, Leya. [Dora, the interviewee's grandmother, is not mentioned in the records.]

I do not know when my paternal grandfather, Adolf Goldenberg, passed away. All I know is that he died before I was born. Grandfather lived in Simferopol. He was bourgeois, owned a house at Gogolevskaya Street, and sold things. I do not know exactly what he sold. Grandfather was married twice. I do not know anything about his first wife. She must have died. I also have no information about his education. I do not know whether he was religious. I do not think he was very religious and neither was Grandmother.

I remember my paternal grandmother, Dora Goldenberg, nee Malinskaya, very well. Judging from the service record of her father I assume that she was born in Simferopol in 1860. She had an elder brother, Avrum Itsek, who was born in 1852, and a sister, Leya, born in 1854. I did not know them.

Grandmother also had another elder brother called Moses Malinskiy. He lived in France. Michel, as he was called, left for France long before the revolution in Russia [4](#). He was married to a French lady. He worked as a doctor. When my father studied in Paris, he stayed with Michel. I do not remember Michel, because when my father and I went to France in the period of 1925-1926, my tonsils were removed in his hospital. Later on, when my father died in 1938, we did not keep touch. That is why I do not know much about him.

My grandmother also had a brother named Osip. He lived in Moscow. Unfortunately, there is little I know about him. I saw two of his daughters. One of them went to Michel in France. She graduated from a dentistry institute there and became a doctor.

Grandmother remained on her own after her husband's death. Only God knows how she could have managed to raise and maintain five children by herself. When they left Simferopol, her house was liquidated for some reason and she wandered from one child to another. She moved from city to city, and from house to house. She went to Mikhail in Yuzovka [about 1200 south of Moscow], then to Alexander in Simferopol, then to her daughter Adelaida in Moscow, then to her son Semion in

Leningrad. She went to the families into which her grandchildren were born. Sometimes she stayed with us in Sevastopol.

Grandmother was unemployed, she was a housewife. She was a wonderful home-maker. She was an excellent cook. After lunch she did physical exercise. Sevastopol is situated in a mountainous area, on the Black Sea coast. Often she used to stroll with us along Sevastopol and its outskirts. I cannot say I spent a lot of time with my grandmother. She mostly went to those children, who needed her help. My mother was a housewife, besides we had a house-keeper. So, there was no need of Grandmother's help.

I do not know what kind of education she got, but she used to write literately and was well-mannered. She must have finished lyceum. Neither she nor Grandfather appeared to be religious. I do not remember Grandmother broach religious topics. She never observed Sabbath or other traditions. All her children were either unreligious like my father, or started professing other beliefs. Grandmother suddenly died in 1931 in our house. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Sevastopol. There were a lot of people at Grandmother's funeral. All relatives got together: her children with their wives, children and grandchildren.

My grandparents had five children: four sons and a daughter. My father, Jacob Goldenberg, was the eldest. His brothers' names were: Alexander, Semion and Mikhail, and his sister's name was Adelaida. Father loved his brothers and sister. But he came to see Alexander more often, as Alexander lived in Bakhchisarai, not far from Sevastopol.

Alexander Goldenberg was born in 1885. He was a gynecologist and obstetrician. He lived and worked in Bakhchisarai. He delivered many children in Bakhchisarai. Uncle Sasha, as everyone called him, died during the Great Patriotic War [5](#), he was shot with other Jews from Bakhchisarai in 1942, though he became Muslim and his second wife was Tartar, but it did not help. His first wife, Lidia, came from a wealthy Jewish family. She died at a young age from tuberculosis. His son, Adolf, was born from his first wife.

Then Alexander married the Tartar Zulfia Khalilova. They did not have children, just raised Adolf. Zulfia survived the war. After the Crimea was liberated by the Soviet troops she was exiled somewhere in Siberia with other Crimean Tartars [cf. Forced deportation to Siberia] [6](#). I know she was fine there. She was an obstetrician, so she could find a job. I do not know what happened to her afterwards.

In 1940 Adolf graduated from the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute and became an engineer. He was mobilized to tank troops at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. He went through the war, and was conferred many awards. He lived in Moscow after the war. He carried a dreadful document during the war. It was a reference from the Bakhchisarai district council regarding his parents' fate: 'Father was shot by the fascists and mother was exiled by Soviet authorities.'

Adolf met his future wife Olga before the war. It was a romantic story. The fiancée was waiting for him, and they got married after the war. Adolf's wife was Russian. It was difficult for Adolf to find a job after the war, maybe because he was a Jew. He worked at a scientific and research institute as an engineer. He was a post-graduate, and then defended his doctorate degree. He was very intelligent. We were friends. He was fair and kind. He was involved in metallurgy, and was a good expert. He passed away in 1990 and was buried in the Moscow city cemetery.

Father's brother Mikhail was born in 1883. He was a mining engineer. He worked in Yuzovsk, Donetsk oblast. He was married to a Russian lady, Alexandra Lebedeva. Uncle became Orthodox [Christian]. They had a son called Boris. Mikhail died in Yuzovsk in 1965. We did not keep in touch with his family.

Semion was the youngest brother, born in 1887. He was a lawyer and economist. Semion was educated in Saint Petersburg. At that time Jews were banned to study in the capital institutions of higher education [cf. Percent of Jews admitted to higher educational institutions] <sup>7</sup>. Semion obtained the service record of his grandfather Shlema Malinskiy in the Sevastopol archive. His grandfather's military merits were taken into consideration and Semion was accepted. This service record is the first extant document of the family.

Semion was married several times. I remember one of his wives. Her name was Olga Brunovna, she was from Latvia. Uncle Semion became Orthodox [Christian]. He died in Leningrad in 1960. I think that my uncles professed the Orthodox belief for the sake of their families. They were brought up by not very religious parents. Maybe it was merely comfortable for their lives.

Aunt Adelaida, the youngest sibling, was born in 1896. She graduated from a medical institute in Moscow. She was a doctor, a radiologist. She went to war and stayed in the front-line hospital. The Russian philosopher Ivan Chetverikov was her husband. [Ivan Pimenovich Chetverikov (1880–1969): was a Russian thinker and philosopher. He was a professor of Kiev Ecclesiastical Academy in the 1900s-1910s. He went through exile and imprisonment during the Soviet regime. In 1941 he was mobilized in the Soviet Army. Upon the end of the war he remained in Germany. He held lectures on Orthodoxy in many German cities from the 1950s to the 1960s and also wrote theological articles. He died in Stuttgart.] It was a great love wedlock. They met in Simferopol, where he held lectures as a philosophy professor. Adelaida took her husband's name and became Orthodox [Christian]. My grandmother did not seem to object to it. They had a son, Nikolay Chetverikov. Adelaida died in Moscow in 1976.

My father, Jacob Goldenberg, was born in Simferopol in 1881. He lived in Simferopol before finishing lyceum in 1899. The same year the widowed grandmother sent my father to Paris to his elder brother Moses or Michel Malinskiy. My father studied at Sorbonne University, at the physics and chemistry department. He graduated in 1900 and entered the medical department. He graduated from the medical department in 1909. Thus, my father managed to graduate from two universities: scientific and medical. In the period of 1905 to 1909 he specialized in cutaneous diseases and syphilis, cutaneous tuberculosis. He was also involved in science.

In 1909 my father went back to Russia. He worked in a hospital in Saint Petersburg. In 1911 he took an exam at Kazanskiy University to start practicing medicine. In 1912 and 1913 he worked as a doctor in the venereal and urological department of the ambulatory in Simferopol. He equipped his office with diagnosis devices at his own cost.

Father was not religious. To begin with, the family that brought him up did not stick to any religious traditions, and cognition of natural sciences did not bring him to religious self-consciousness. Father was loved by everybody in his surroundings. He was smart, benevolent and willing to help. He was strict and exigent to me, but still he loved me very much. Father had a wonderful sense of humor, he gave everybody nicknames. He called me jokingly a fool. We had an elderly house-keeper. He called her a hex. One of our relatives was a little bit hoity-toity, and he called her an

empress.

Mother's parents lived in Sevastopol. Grandmother Julia Geftman, whose maiden name I do not know, was born in southern Ukraine, in the town of Genichesk [near the Crimea]. I heard that many of my mother's relatives were from the hick town Genichesk. My grandmother was very mild. She adored all her children, especially Alexander, whose death was about to kill her. From my mother's words I know that Grandmother was very religious, but I do not know the details, though I showed interest in that subject.

I do not know where my maternal grandfather, Pinkus Geftman, was born. Sevastopol was totally devastated after the Crimean war. There was a need in qualified people who were willing to work on the revival of the city. My young grandparents came to Sevastopol in the 1850s. Grandfather was clever and entrepreneurial. I know that they used to change apartments moving from poorer districts to the wealthier ones. Their financial position improved and their family grew. Finally they settled in a very beautiful and prestigious district of Sevastopol near the historic boulevard.

I do not know if my grandfather was educated, but he had a lot of gumption and was go-getting. I do not know what he was dealing with exactly. All I know is that he had something to do with construction. He came into money due to his hard work. He was known in Sevastopol for constructing there first steam mill, for the sake of which Grandfather became prosperous. Then he invested money into the construction of income-yielding houses. He built a lot in Sevastopol. Even now there is a house in the vicinity of the market, built at the cost of my grandfather.

He also built a nice big house for his son Grisha after he got married. Grandfather built a country house in Balaklava [coastal town, outside Sevastopol] for his family. He wanted to restore a prayer house at the cemetery in Sevastopol. The building remained under construction. When my husband and I lived in Sevastopol after the war, we saw its shambles.

Grandfather started building a shrine for his family, but did not manage to finish it. He thought that he and his kin would be buried in that shrine. He did not want to leave Russia, but things did not turn out the way he expected since the revolution of 1917 was in his way. My wealthy and entrepreneurial grandfather could see through that he would not be able to normally live and work during the communist regime. That is why he quit everything and immigrated with his family.

All Geftmans left, but my mother. My relatives did not approve of the revolution. When they left they just took money, which momentarily turned into mere piece of paper. First they went to Constantinople [today Istanbul, Turkey]. Then they had a skimpy living, wandering from one country to another. In the end they all happened to be in France. The entire family got together in Paris. They were not well-off, but could abide by their living. There were a lot of them and they helped each other.

Members of our family were buried in the shrine built by Grandfather. My uncle Alexander Geftman, who perished tragically, was the first to be buried there. Then my paternal grandmother, Dora Goldenberg, was buried, then my father, Jacob Goldenberg. All of them were reburied. During the war some people sheltered in the shrine. After the war the shrine turned into a public toilet. Now it is closed down, and the place is marred.



My mother's entire family was rather religious except for my mother. They stuck to all major Jewish traditions, observed Sabbath, went to the synagogue during holidays, but they wore mundane clothes. My grandparents and their children strove to help out people in their surroundings. They always were charitable. I was told by my mother that every time before the holidays they gave dowry to the brides from poor families. My grandfather took the most active part in it. Being so go-getting and brisk he raised such a big family. All children finished lyceums and almost all of them got higher education.

Before the revolution Grandfather had heart problems, and his sugar was high in blood. He was taken to Karlovy Vary [8](#) and Yessentuki in the Caucasus every year. [Yessentuki: Popular Russian resort, specializing in treatment of the digestive apparatus and metabolism. There were over 20 mineral springs, used for treatment.] The whole family went there. They had fun, making hoaxes and putting on pageant costumes. Grandfather died in 1926 and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Paris, France.

My mother, Rosalia Geftman, had two sisters and four brothers. Her sisters' names were Maria and Sarah, and her brothers' names were Joseph, Alexander, Grigoriy and Konstantin.

The elder brother, Joseph Geftman, was born in 1881. He did not get higher education, but he was the only one who actively helped his father with his business. He was a loyal son, and a caring brother. He stayed with his parents all his life. When his father passed away he became the head of the kin, which lived overseas. He also took care of his mother, who stayed in Russia. He corresponded with her. He was not married, but he had a daughter from a Russian lady in Russia. Joseph died in 1957. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Paris.

Maria was born in 1883. Her fate was tragic. She was married to a certain Rosendorf. Their marriage was not successful. He appeared to be well-promising, but turned out to be a lazybones, an eternal student. The grandparents tried helping him to be on solid ground, and practically maintained the family, but their efforts were futile. In 1910 Maria gave birth to a daughter and named her Vilgemina. Maria became deaf after parturition. She was sent to Austria with her husband. Then her daughter and nanny followed them. The grandparents kept on providing for them. They lived together for some time, and then they divorced. It was a big tragedy for the entire family.

She came back home with her child. Her hearing partially came back. At the beginning of World War I Maria's parents found a husband for her. She married a dentist, Isaac Epstein. He was a rather wealthy and decent man from Sevastopol. It was a prearranged marriage. He had a good five-room apartment in the heart of the city, with two balconies and a sea view. They started living together in that apartment. Their marriage started very well, and ended tragically. Maria and Isaac immigrated together. Isaac took their departure hard as well as the loss of all his property. Soon he died of rupture of the heart, and again Maria was by herself with her daughter.

Before getting married she was very good at embroidery. She started embroidering in France to make a living for her daughter and herself. She embroidered linen for fashionable saloons owned by wealthy Russian immigrants. When we came to Paris she gave Mother a couple of things, which Mother never used, but kept as souvenirs. These were gorgeous chemises made from crêpe de Chine embroidered with hemstitch. Maria died in a concentration camp in 1942. During the occupation the Germans took her with the daughter to Germany, as her neighbors told us. I do not

know which camp it was. We do not know the story, whether it was somebody who gave her away, or she was not able to hide because she was deaf.

Mother's younger sister Sarah was born in 1895. She was very close with my mother. Sarah married a Jew, Upstein, and left for Kiev with him. I do not remember his name. I know he was a wealthy man, and they were happy together. They had a son, Victor. Sarah lost her husband while she was young. Nobody could assume that he would die so young. He got ill. His disease progressed, and he suddenly passed away. His property was insured, but the insurance was not paid on time. He lost everything. Uncle Joseph strove to look into the matter, but he could not save much of the inherited property. They were able to buy only a beautician's office for the saved money from the inheritance.

After the Revolution of 1917 Sarah's family lived in Warsaw, Poland, and after her husband's death she went to her relatives in France. She worked as a beautician in France. She had her own saloon. Sarah died in Paris in 1965 and was buried there next to Grandfather. Victor kept on studying and working at nights, as he was left without money. He was very capable, and before the war he graduated from two institutions – technical and juridical institutes. After the war he became a rather well-known attorney in Paris.

My mother's next brother, Alexander, was born in 1889. As I mentioned before, he tragically perished in 1918. He worked as a doctor in Odessa [9](#) and came to Sevastopol very often. Then he went to see his elderly parents. Grandfather was seriously ill. Alexander was supposed to return to Odessa on Saturday. It was a grievous situation. My religious grandmother said, 'How will you be going on Saturday? You cannot leave on Saturday, Sanechka.' And so he stayed. Then, in the evening, he stood by the window for some reason and the passing sentinels saw him and shot him. It was a turbulent time. After the revolution the Crimea was a boiling pot – anarchy and scattering packs of gangs [10](#). It is not known whose sentry it was. There was no way you could even ask. Alexander died at once. He was very handsome, talented. Besides, he was young and single. As I told you, after that tragedy I was given the double name Tamara-Alexandra.

Uncle Grigoriy was born in 1887. He finished lyceum, but did not manage to obtain a higher education as he married at a young age. Unfortunately, I do not remember his wife's name. He had two children: his son, Leonid, was born in 1910 and his daughter, Renata, was born in 1914. He immigrated to Germany with his two little children. I do not know the details, but they had a hard life there, and they moved to Paris later. In Paris he was fond of cinema, worked as an accountant in the film business. He was very talented, was keen on theater, took part in amateur performances. But his parents disapproved of it. Grandfather thought it was not serious. Grigoriy died in Paris in 1970.

My mother's brother Konstantin was born in 1901. He studied in lyceum, when the revolution began. He immigrated to Russia with his parents. He was keen on cinema like Grigoriy. He was a movie producer. He was highly appreciated as he had great organizational skills. He selected good actors. He was able to provide decorations and costumes at a low cost. Konstantin was very frugal. He had a positive attitude towards the immigrants from Russia, and helped them the way he could.

His marriage was not a success. He was married to a Russian Jew. I do not remember her name. She was not emotionally stable. They divorced soon. They had a child, whom Konstantin loved very much. He had eardrum inflammation with complications on the brain. The doctors could not rescue

him and he died. Konstantin never married again, and devoted his entire life to the cinema. Shortly before his death, Konstantin got severely ill. He died in Paris in 1967.

I did not have any brothers or sisters, but I had a lot of cousins in Russia and France. I loved them as my brothers and sisters. I had four cousins in France – two girls and two boys: Vilgemina Kagan, nee Rosendorf, the daughter of Aunt Maria, who perished in a concentration camp. Victor Upstein, Aunt Sarah's son, born in 1914 and Uncle Grigoriy's children Renata Geftman born in 1916 and Leonid Geftman, born in 1912. They all emigrated from Russia in childhood, but they kept in touch with Mother and me.

We kept on writing each other even during the Great Patriotic War, after the grandparents' and parents' death. They were our consolation in the hardest times, as we knew they were prosperous. Mother did not receive letters at home. She went to the post office and received mail post restante. At that time it was dangerous to correspond with relatives abroad [11](#). We did not write about our hardship. The letters were concise and said things like: 'we are fine.'

The correspondence during war time was peculiar. We started receiving letters written as if from a third person. It happened after the Germans attacked France. We had a letter from Lausanne dated September 27, 1940. It was sent to Moscow. The letter read: 'Madam, I am writing as per request of the Geftman family, who cannot write to you for a year. They are safe and sound etc.' It was my cousin Victor, who wrote the letter. I recognized his handwriting.

My cousins Leonid and Victor were very friendly. During the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War in 1941 they both were mobilized in the French army. They did very well and in 1942 they were released from service. After the war Leonid and Victor got married simultaneously. Victor was lucky to marry a Jew, born in France. They lived very well together and had two children. Her mother was a doctor, and her father was a sculptor. Leonid's wife Irene is still alive, though blind. She now lives in the suburbs of Paris. She is one of the few relatives remaining in Paris. I write to her in French sometimes. Somebody reads my letters to her. And she sends me greetings wishing me good health.

Vilgemina and Renata could not obtain higher education. Both of them were very civilized and educated. Before getting married Vilgemina stayed with her mother. She took the linen embroidered by her mother to the customers. She was not prosperous though. She got married shortly before the war. Her husband was a very educated man, and he educated her, so to say. She was very polite, a connoisseur of theater and literature.

Renata was an extraordinary personality. She was educated in-depth. She was in touch with artists, sculptors, doctors and philosophers. Many of them dropped their mundane professions and became activists in Catholic culture. She became Catholic. It was not an unexceptional move for France in those times. The cultural French elite, being dissatisfied with the cultural and spiritual life, was interested in religious matters. There were several communities at Catholic cathedrals, exquisite intelligentsia got together there.

When her father found out that she had converted, he ran amok. It was a tragedy, since her parents were deeply religious Jews. Her father gave in, after multiple scenes and scandals. She rescued almost all her kin during the occupation of France by the Germans. She helped them owing to her acquaintance with religious Catholics. Renata's friends sheltered her.



After the war Renata left for Israel for permanent abode. It was her cherished dream to live there. She was involved in great propaganda in Israel. She was invited to France. She went there for a number of times. She took the floor in many different places talking about Israel and life there. She was received by the pope; it happened in the 1960s. I do not know the details as Renata and I lived in different countries and we did not get in touch that often. She had great spiritual connections. She wrote about her life, and on her decision to profess Catholicism in her book 'Waiting for the Dawn.' [published in French in Paris in 1985]. It is a highly literary piece. Renata died in Jerusalem in 1989.

My kin had difficult times during the German occupation of France. My relatives had to hide. They were helped by Renata, Grigoriy's daughter. It was her and her Catholic belief that helped them survive. Due to her connections with the Catholics she managed to make arrangements for the relatives to stay in cathedrals and convents. Catholics saved my relatives' lives.

Then Grandmother and Joseph were sent to Vichy. At first that territory was not occupied by Germans. Then when it was occupied by Germans, the sons took Grandmother to Nice, where Maria lived with her daughter at that time. Soon somebody told them that they had to run away. They moved to the French Alps. They lived there in a hamlet and were very indigent. There was nothing there, no things to buy. Luckily, they somehow managed to survive. Renata worked in the military hospital, then joined her relatives, who hid in the mountains. All of them survived, but Maria. She was captured by Germans in Nice, and died. At the end of 1943 everybody returned to Paris, and kept on hiding from fascists. Grandmother passed away in 1943. She was buried secretly. I do not even know where.

All my cousins came to Moscow several times. I was in Paris once. Now they are all dead; all my mother's brothers and sisters and my cousins are buried in the Jewish cemetery in Paris.

My mother was born in 1885. She was a gifted musician, and played the grand piano very well. When she finished lyceum, her parents sent her to Austria to study at the conservatory in Vienna. At that time her sister Maria also lived in Vienna with her husband and child. Mother stayed with them for a while until their divorce. Then Maria and her child left for Sevastopol. Mother moved to Berlin and continued her studies at the Berlin conservatory. She was as successful there as in Vienna.

My mother was so deeply immersed in her studies that her health suffered and she was afflicted with tuberculosis. She still managed to graduate from the conservatory. Then she went to Northern Italy and was treated for her tuberculosis. She put on weight considerably and when she came back to Sevastopol she was not slender as she had been before. But she still remained beautiful and liked to dress up.

I do not know how my parents met. I think, it was a prearranged marriage, though a love wedlock. They got married in 1914. My mother's parents were religious, and I think their wedding was in accordance with all Jewish rituals. They both were very successful and educated young people. My parents had recently come back from Europe. Father was in France, then went to Kazan. He also worked in Saint Petersburg. Mother studied in Germany. The honeymooners went to Paris to Father's uncle Michel. Father was to improve his knowledge in medicine in France. But his plan remained unrealized as World War I was unleashed. My parents came back to Simferopol.

My father was in the army in the Caucasus and in 1915 the 10th army. He was demobilized in 1916, and in Batoumi [about 1600 km south of Moscow] he got ill. He had a problem with his legs, and there he was treated with therapeutic mud. Only in 1917 did my father come back home and my parents could start their life as a family.

They settled in Sevastopol. Father began to work in the venereal department of the hospital. Then he established a hospital for treatment of venereal diseases. He did a lot in that field and also worked as an advisor for the institute of physical therapy. Father was a remarkable expert in that field. There was also a school at his department. A lot of qualified experts came from that school. Father was highly appreciated and loved. Many times he was selected as a chairman of the Burlaw court, and deputy in the municipal authorities. [Burlaw court, ("court of comrades") was a special form of collective justice that existed in the Soviet Union. Burlaw courts were elected for the term of two years by open voting of working collective members, and were entitled to consider minor offences and to impose fines up to 50 Soviet rubles (compared to the average monthly salary of 120 rubles) or to pass the case for consideration to regular courts of justice. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burlaw\\_court](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burlaw_court)]

Mother did not continue her musical career. She became a housewife, creating a hearth at home for my father. I was born in 1917. These were terrible times, full of blood-shed. There was a revolution in Russia. Streams of Russian fugitives from Petersburg, Moscow and other Russian cities fled from Russia via the Crimea.

Grandfather Pinkus loved Mother very much, and missed her when he was in Paris. Uncle Joseph always wrote to us in Sevastopol on behalf of Grandpa. Then he got really sick. Mother decided to say good-bye to him. I do not know how she managed to get a permit for the trip. Maybe at that time rules were not so strict. So we went to Paris in 1925. We lived in France for a year and a half, and then Grandfather died.

I went to school in Paris and made friends with my cousin Renata Geftman. My relatives rented a two-storied cottage in a decent Paris district, though not in the most fashionable. There were a lot of rooms. Uncle Grigoriy and his family lived in that house, as well as my grandparents and Aunt Maria with her daughter. Joseph and Konstantin lived separately.

Our family was very friendly and rather religious. We celebrated all Jewish religious holidays. I was deeply impressed by the celebration of Pesach. We put out special dishes. We washed and changed our dresses. All relatives were dressed up. There was a festive air in the house. Grandmother did not cook, as she was very old. She stayed in the corner knitting and making clothes for our dolls. Aunt Nadezhda, Grigoriy's wife, cooked everything. I remember delicious gefilte fish, potato patties. Aunt Nadezhda, my mother and Aunt Maria baked strudels from matzah flour, stuffed with jam, raisins and nuts.

We observed all rites and traditions of the holiday. Before Pesach we cleaned the house and put out different dishes. We took the furniture from the apartment and washed walls. There was not a single bread crumb in the house. They bought a lot of matzah for the entire Pascal period. Bread was not eaten for eight days. My uncles went to the synagogue.

On the first paschal night Grandfather conducted the Seder reclining on pillows. He broke the matzah into three pieces and hid the middle part between the pillows. Someone from the children

had to steal it and hide it, and then give it to Grandfather for a ransom. I was the one who was supposed to snatch that matzah. Uncle Joseph read the Haggadah in Ivrit, then my cousin Leonid asked him the traditional four questions in Ivrit. After that Grandmother read a prayer and we all sang mirthful paschal songs. We did not observe Jewish rituals at home, that's why I enjoyed seeing all those interesting things there.

Before we left for France with my mother, Father asked his uncle Michel to have my tonsils removed. I was afflicted with quinsy annually. I was operated on in the clinic where my uncle worked. The operation was not complicated, but I was about to die from severe blood loss.

Grandfather died in 1926. He was buried in Paris in the Jewish cemetery, with all rites and traditions observed. I was not taken to the funeral and neither were the other little grandchildren. Soon we came back to Sevastopol via Warsaw, where we stopped for a couple of hours to see my mother's sister Sarah's family. Upon our return we kept on writing to our kin.

Sevastopol, the city of my childhood, was wonderful, beautiful and extraordinary. It was located in a picturesque area: the mountain and the sea. We lived in the city center. The city transport was well developed, there were trams and lots of cabs. There were tram lines to the railway station, around the city and to the market. I remember in wintertime, when there was a lot of snow, the cabmen harnessed the horses to sleighs. Sevastopol was a cultural city. In summertime my mother took me to the sea shore. Though, I was unwell in summertime. I could not stand the heat and stuffy air very well.

My parents refused to leave the motherland. They thought that educated and prosperous people would do well in Soviet Russia, and besides he did not want to part from his relatives. He also was sure that a doctor of such a level would always be in demand no matter who was wielding the scepter. After my parents' relatives left, they moved to Maria Epstein's apartment. It was such a good apartment that after father's death many would have liked to get it.

It was a five-room apartment, and then during the Soviet regime it was divided. We were given three rooms. It was not a communal apartment [12](#), like most of the apartments at that time, but a separate apartment. One room was common, but the other two isolated. Then they cut us out of one room, and we were left with two rooms with two balconies. Now we lived in a communal apartment. But still it was enough for us. One of the rooms was over 40 square meters, the other one was over 30.

Our neighbors were Soviet organizational people. I do not know their names. We did not communicate with them, though we quarreled at times. Mother's sister's family was leaving in haste and left almost everything in the apartment: furniture, knick-knacks and pictures. When my mother moved to Moscow in 1939, that furniture was brought to my apartment. It is still here.

I did not have a nanny in my childhood, but I had a French governess before going to school. She taught me French and how to sew. She came to us for a couple of hours a week. I did not go to kindergarten, at that time they did not exist. We had a house-keeper. Mother was a home-maker. She had lots of things to do so she would not have time to think of earning her bread and butter.

Our life was not all beer and skittles. First of all these were the times of starvation [cf. Famine in Ukraine] [13](#) and drought in the country, and the salary of my father was very skimpy, no matter

how well-qualified he was. His salary was not enough to make a living, and mother tried really hard to feed us. She sold some of the things left by our relatives in the commissioner shops or swapped them at the market for food.

I got ill very often, because my organism could not cope with my precipitant growing. I grew quickly and tall for my age. Once I caught a whooping cough. My mother and I left for the Southern Crimea and lived close to Yalta for a month. I was a little girl at that time. We lived in a house, which belonged to a famous medicine professor. He used to be rich. When we stayed there, an elderly professor lived there with his old servant and a dog. The servant served him and us. The old professor was one of the few remaining intelligentsia representatives in the Crimea. Later, I found out that that servant left the house during the starvation period in order to not eat the professor's food and died somewhere.

There was a dreadful famine in Ukraine. People starved in the Crimea, too. There were train stewards, working on the route Crimea-Moscow-Crimea among my father's clients. They helped us a lot. They brought us provision, bought in places on their way. When I lived in Moscow, my mother always sent fruit via them.

My parents were not religious. We did not mark any religious holidays or rites at home. Though, my father's friends got together in our house. My father was a mirthful and an interesting man. He was loved by people. Doctors, patients and friends came to see him. These were not only Jews, but also Ukrainians and Russians. The doors were open for people. The kettle was boiling, though there were not a lot of tasty things. People brought what they could. All night long they used to have boiling water with home-made jam and bread, having a chat and joking around.

They tried to teach me music. My mother's friend, who lived in our building, taught me music. She used to say jokingly, if she was to die, it would happen during the class with me. I was not lazy, but I was not capable, and I did not have an ear for music.

I started school from the fourth grade. First my mother and I left for France, and I went to school there, then I studied at home for some time. In 1931 I went to the closest seven-year school in our vicinity. I was more prone to the Arts than sciences, but nobody was interested in that. At that time engineering sciences were more important, while the Arts were condoned. I finished school satisfactorily. Then I went to the vocational school of the famous marine plant in Sevastopol, where team training was practiced. Finishing seven grades of schooling and that vocational school were equal to compulsory education. There were several departments in the vocation school, viz. mechanics, metal processing and wood processing.

I had to work and study at the same time. I was a milling-machine operator. It was not my cup of tea. Finally I was lucky to finish that vocational school somehow, and then I entered Rabfak [14](#), and I had to study a little bit. It was a real ordeal for me. The hardest was the subject metal resistance. Father went to have a talk with the teacher of that subject. The teacher told my father, 'Your daughter is a good girl, but physics, mathematics and other precise science is not for her. She has to study at the Arts school.'

It was decided that I should enter the Foreign Languages Institute as I knew French. One of my father's patients had some connections in Moscow. He was very grateful to my father, who rescued his life, and he got to know all information for the admission in the institute and took all my papers

to Moscow. I was very modest and bashful at that time, and not very prudent. I was always being ashamed of something. I was 17.

I remember the day when I came to the institute wearing a white hat. I did not pass the Russian exam very successfully, but my French was pretty good, and I was accepted. I stayed with my father's sister Adelaida for two years. Her husband, Ivan Chetverikov, was exiled from Moscow as a philosophy professor because he underestimated the significance of Marxist theory. In two years he was allowed to live near Moscow. He came back home, and I went to live in a hostel. There were six girls from different cities in one room. We were very friendly and helped each other out. We shared food and had meals together. I remember how we bought very expensive dressy shoes for everybody to share on important occasions, like a date or a wedding.

I remember bloodshed in 1937 [cf. Great Terror] [15](#). Teachers were lost gradually, especially German language teachers. There were less and less teachers, and sometimes there were no teachers to supply for the missing ones. I believed everything told at the meetings, things I read in papers regarding the condemnation of 'enemies of the people' [16](#). There was no television at that time, but those condemnations were public. I was overly gullible like the majority of people back then. Not very often, but still I heard of the arrests of my acquaintances. I thought that those cases were errors.

I did not have many friends in Moscow. I liked to visit the family of my aunt Adelaida's pals. They were very civilized and pleasant people. The host stayed and worked in France for a long time. He was well-mannered, educated, gentle and intelligent. Then all of a sudden I got to know that he was exiled from Moscow. His wife's elderly parents were left on their own. I went to see them. My room-mate in the hostel also vanished. But then one could not even admit a thought that it could have been targeted illegitimacy. If injustice was directed towards pals, it was considered a mistake, but in general the actions of the authorities were deemed as extermination of the enemies of the Soviet regime.

Meanwhile the institute life continued. We got together in the conference hall to listen to Stalin's speeches on the radio or to watch modern movies. There were also a lot of circles. I was fond of literature and enjoyed studying in general. On the weekend my friends and I used to go to the cinema, theater and museums. We also went dancing and met with boys. I remained timid and shy, and did not date anybody.

I graduated from the institute in the full swing of the Spanish events [cf. Spanish Civil War] [17](#). When I was in the fourth year, we were taught Spanish. After graduation I got a mandatory job assignment [18](#) in Obninsk [about 100 km south of Moscow], at the Spanish orphanage, where children of Spanish anti-fascists stayed. Obninsk was a hick town, though picturesque. That orphanage was meant for Spanish children. Some of my fellow students left with me. We settled in the local hostel. Our life there was tedious and monotonous.

Father was severely ill at that time, and before leaving for work I decided to visit my parents. My father passed away on the day of my arrival. He did not recognize me. He confused me with his younger sister Adelaida. But I was told he was awaiting me that night. It was the year of 1938. Almost the whole city was at my father's burial. He was so revered. There was a report on his death in the Sevastopol paper of 12th September 1938. Father was buried in the Jewish cemetery, in the shrine built by Grandfather.



Mother got into trouble after Father's death. They tried to evict her from the apartment. It was so good that many officials would have liked to settle in there. We lived in the city center. We had only two rooms left, but still they were hunkered for. It was a very difficult year for my mother. They harassed her a lot, called her to the NKVD [19](#), terrorized her. They considered that she trespassed against the Soviet regime as her rich father had left Russia after the revolution. While the father was alive, nobody made attempts on that apartment as he was well-respected in the city. My mother, having been confused by those indecent people, suffered in Sevastopol.

I worked in the Spanish orphanage for half a year. Then I was offered a job in the French chair of the Moscow Foreign Languages Institute, I had graduated from. It took pains to be lodged in the institute hostel. The hostel looked like a wooden barrack, located on the outskirts of Moscow. I shared a room with the English teacher. Soon she left, I do not even know where to. I suppose she was imprisoned. It was the time when people vanished into thin air.

Then I decided to move my mother to Moscow from Sevastopol. It was very difficult to get my mother registered in Moscow [20](#). Her receiving a personal pension for being a widow helped my mother. [Personal pension in the USSR was a monthly social security payment to those people who had certain merits in the sphere of state, social, economic, cultural and military fields. That pension exceeded the common pension by 2,5 times]. Mother stayed with me the whole time. She shared all my tribulations and worries. We survived the war in the hostel, and it always was easier for me as my dear person was close to me.

My husband, Andrey Shamardin, was born in 1907 in some tiny hamlet of Kursk region. He came from a common family of a Russian peasant. I have never met his parents. I do not even know their names. He finished compulsory school in 1925. When he left school, he went to the navy as a volunteer. He was allocated in Sevastopol. He lived there and was an active member of OSOAVIACHIMA. [The society of assistance in defense and aviation and chemical construction, it was a mass volunteer organization of USSR citizens, existing from 1927 till 1948. The aim was to assist the army in military training of the civilians and nurturing patriotic spirit in them.].

Then he had one of the leading positions in the party work in Sevastopol, where we bumped into each other in 1937 during one of my holiday trips home. We saw each other a couple of times, went dancing and to the cinema. We were not in touch when I left for Moscow.

However, he knew my father very well and gave my mother a hand, when she had the problems with the apartment after Father's death. He sympathized with us, and turned out to be very cordial and kind. He exerted his every effort for the eviction process to be hindered. He was the chairman of the executive committee [Ispolkom] [21](#) of the district, where my mother's apartment was located. He rendered both moral and physical support. He was the one who helped Mother move to Moscow, packed her things and made arrangements with stevedores. After that we used to correspond regularly. I used to go Sevastopol on multiple occasions, and Andrey came to Moscow to see me. We understood that we wanted to be together.

We got married at the end of 1939 in Moscow. We just went to the marriage registration office and got registered there. And then in the evening we drank a bottle of champagne. The next day Andrey left for Sevastopol. He could not just quit his job. There were some problems with economic issues. After his departure from Sevastopol, there was a court hearing, where somebody else's negligence was appended to him. Some people were blaming him. As a result, he was expelled

from the party and had to leave Sevastopol. Soon he found a job as a locksmith and retired from that organization. He worked for different companies involved in water supply, such as 'Mosvodokanal' [Moscow water channel].

- **During the war**

On 22nd June, 1941 the war was unleashed. My husband and I were about to go for a stroll as it was broadcast on the radio that the war had been unleashed. Our life changed dramatically. My husband was waiting for mobilization. He was drafted a month after the war began. He was in the Baltic navy, and stayed there until the end of the war. He was demobilized in June 1945, and he came back to Moscow.

Shortly after the war began students were sent to the vicinities of Moscow to be involved in construction of antitank fortifications. Other teachers and I brought the students warm clothes and food. The students lived in poor conditions. They slept on cold floors, but they kept their chins up. My mother and I stayed in Moscow during the war. In October 1941, when the Germans came close to Moscow, people started panicking and fleeing from the city. The rector of our institute was gone, he must have escaped the city, too. Our institute was not evacuated, even during constant bombing and when the Germans approached the city.

The winter of 1941 was very severe. We were cold and hungry. Transport did not work very well in Moscow. We had to walk back home from work, because at that time there was no transportation to the outskirts where our hostel was located. I received lunch in the institute canteen and carried it home in a pot to my mother. The hostel in the city center was vacant, and my mother and I moved there. There was electricity and heating there, besides it was in close vicinity to the institute, so I did not have to walk a long distance. Some other teachers found a place for themselves in that hostel. There were not a lot of teachers who stayed in Moscow.

Our neighbors in the hostel were very interesting and civil people. The Latin teacher lived next to us. He was a very pleasant and intellectual person. I also made friends with the family of the French teacher Katsovich. In 1932 he came here from France. I especially enjoyed having a chat with his wife Maria Tok, who also came from France. She worked as a translator.

We had very little food. Mother tried to make some variety, and changed things for provision. It was very cold. Students sat there wearing their coats during classes. I went to the markets near Moscow to buy warm clothes, but my trips were not always successful. I was robbed of the purchased things or my money was stolen. Mother learned how to type and I had odd jobs typing. My mother typed for some employers of our institute, and they highly appreciated her work, since she was a literate typist.

At the end of 1941 our institute was replenished with new people. There were two institutes of foreign languages in Moscow. One of them was closed down, so the teachers and students came to our institute to study and teach. There were many interesting and good teachers. Gradually institute life revived in Moscow.

When my husband came back from the front, he worked for different companies in Moscow. First he went to work for the same organization he had worked for before, 'Mosvodokanal,' as a locksmith. Then he worked in the brewery. All his jobs were connected with administrative support.

He changed jobs very often because of the conflicts with directors, though he was not a conflict person. He was very sociable and willing to help. He was very socially active in the district he lived. Our phone was constantly ringing. Our neighbors, acquaintances called asking to tackle complicated communal issues as they knew there would be an understanding, though we lived in the hostel.

My mother did not always get along with husband. Of course, he was not as intelligent as my kin. Sometimes my mother was offended by his roughness and brusqueness. But when my mother got seriously ill, he was looking after her very devotedly. If I had to go somewhere, he stayed with her. When my mother had the fits at night, he stayed by her bed the whole night. I was very grateful to him for such an efficient and precious support.

In 1945 we went to Sevastopol. It was horrible there. The city was totally devastated, in shambles. From November 1941 till June 1942 the Germans had been trying to capture the city. The city defense was unprecedented, though the Germans had significant predominance in number, there was constant bombing and artillery attacks. Sevastopol inhabitants hid in the basements of the destroyed houses and in the caves near Sevastopol. There used to be extractions of white stone, therefore huge caves remained. People settled in those caves. There were also hospitals.

At the beginning of 1942 Germans captured the city. On July 22 they shot Jews. We had a lot of relatives in Sevastopol. All of them perished. I remember there were two of my mother's cousins. They lived with their blind mother Sonya. She passed away during Sevastopol's siege. Her daughters were taken to Balaklava along with other Jews, and shot there. Nobody survived from our relatives in Sevastopol.

We brought an elderly woman, Anna Kovalenko, my father's former patient, who looked after my father during the entire period of his illness to Moscow. She went through the horror of the siege and occupation. She lived with us in the hostel. The four of us shared one poky room in the hostel. In 1949 Anna died in our arms. We lived in the hostel with one shower on the floor and a toilet at the end of the corridor, one common kitchen with two gas cookers, cockroaches and rats until 1977.

### • Professional and later life

I never gave up teaching. I taught French and practical French grammar. It was a difficult job. I would not wish anybody such a job. In 1954 I defended my post-graduate thesis, and was conferred with a scientific doctorate degree in philological science. I took pains to defend the thesis. I was working on my dissertation and teaching full time. I was lucky to have a library next to the hostel, where I moved during the war, so I could go there after work and deal with my dissertation. It was impossible for me to work at home considering the conditions under which I used to live at that time.

When I defended my scientific work and graduated from post-graduate school I was appointed a job. They tried to send me to Gorky in spite of the fact that my husband worked in Moscow. I objected to it. I was expelled from the institute. I was unemployed for some time. Then I went back to the institute. I worked as a senior teacher, and my salary was inconsiderable increased.

I was very happy to make two useful things during my pedagogical career. We did not have French textbooks. We had to publish our own. I, along with a co-author, prepared a student manual with exercises for the French department and French Grammar textbook. Those books were used for quite a while. Then there were a couple of editions for our students to be provided with the manuals. We received rather skimpy emolument for such work, but the pleasure was entirely ours. We did a good job that made teachers' and students' lives easier.

I began to work with post-graduate students. They were very different: gifted and totally without penchants. Some people from the province were also referred to our institute. They came to improve their qualification without being prepared. Some of them were more capable, others were totally incapable. Of course, it took a lot of time to teach them. A number of those teachers intending to refresh their knowledge, became post-graduate students, wrote dissertations and defended them. Some of them were seeking even a doctorate. So, I was satisfied with my job. It was difficult for me to hold lectures. I did not enjoy it at all! The team of our teachers was very friendly. We lived like one big family, being there for each other, assisting and encouraging each other.

Our life was difficult and joyless. I used to get ill very often, my mother was constantly unwell. I kept late hours at work, had classes with my students, but still we could hardly make a living. Mother took care of the household, cooked, cleaned and went shopping. I still remained modest and shy, did not want to be a burden to anybody.

I did not get along with my husband. He had his own life: friends, carousing. He stopped to care about my opinion, did not spend nights at home. I did not even try to change anything. It was of no importance or interest to me. Our upbringing, education and values were way too different, but we still lived together. We did not have children. We lived modestly, did not have any guests or receptions.

I remember boisterous meetings after Stalin's work 'Marxism and Problems of Linguistics' was published in 1950, where he denounced the famous linguist and academician N. Marr as incorrect and having non-Marxist understanding of linguistic issues. [Nikolay Marr (1865-1934) was a Georgia-born historian and linguist who gained a reputation as a scholar of the Caucasus during the 1910s before embarking on his controversial "Japhetic theory" on the origin of language (from 1924) and related speculative linguistic hypotheses. Marr's hypotheses was used as a rationale in the campaign during the 1920-30s in the Soviet Union of introduction of Latin alphabets for smaller ethnicities of the country. In 1950, the "Japhetic theory" fell from official favour, with Joseph Stalin denouncing it as anti-Marxist. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas\\_Marr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicholas_Marr)]

In the article he responded to the question of one student of the German department. Our teachers, who followed Marr's studies, were publicly reprimanded at general meetings. Many people were fired, or assigned to lower positions just for the bravery to speak their minds. After that any methodological work had to start with the words about Stalin, about his discovery, which turned things over making one step ahead. Stalin should be given credit for writing his articles by himself. He had a simple and legible style, explaining things very well. As compared to Lenin's works, which were difficult to read, Stalin's clear and understandable works conveyed verity, pushing to follow instructions without pondering and doubts.

I did not enter the party, though I was suggested to do so on a number of occasions. I was apolitical as I knew that my husband had been expelled from the party.

In 1948 a remarkable Jewish actor, Mikhoels [22](#), perished tragically, then there was a struggle against cosmopolitans [23](#). At first, I did not understand that all those actions were directed against Jews. I was very gullible. Gradually there were less and less Jewish teachers at the university. I was astounded why I was not touched before retirement. Maybe, for the reason that I was neither bellicose, nor an upstart, but remained in the shadow.

When the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee [24](#) was imprisoned and shot, and doctors were put behind bars [cf. Doctors' Plot] [25](#), I understood that all those actions were against Jews. It was a dreadful time. What could we have done? Only sympathize. Jews were squeezed out from jobs. Finally I was the only Jew that remained in our faculty. There were much less Jews among students as well.

I took Stalin's death in March 1953 as a tragedy just like the overwhelming majority in my country. It was unimaginable what happened in the country. The coffin with Stalin's body was placed in the column hall of the Kremlin. Thousands of people were streaming there to say good-bye to Stalin. The line to the column hall started at Trubnaya Street, which was several kilometers away from the Kremlin. There was a terrible jostle, and many people died in the throng. I was trying to get there with my neighbor and his pal, but it was useless. Nobody made it mandatory. It was a huge emotional outburst. There was a meeting in the institute. Teachers and students took the floor. People cried.

My mother and I still lived in the hostel. There were many attempts to evict us. The resident director came for a number of times and made scenes. The apartment I have was bought from our institutes' cooperative in 1977. It took us many years to save money for that apartment. I remained in the institute until 1977. Then I got unwell and retired. My mother had a long life: 103 years. She was the only one of her kin, who lived so long. She died in 1988. Her body was incinerated. She was buried in Vagankovskoye city cemetery. Mother wanted me to bury her in Sevastopol. There was no way I could do that. There was nobody left from her kin to maintain her grave.

Perestroika [26](#), which began in the 1980s, was good from the standpoint that people were able to communicate with their relatives overseas, write to them, visit them, and even immigrate abroad, if they wished. I could not have believed changes for the better. I was not interested in politics, just had the same hard and tedious life. With perestroika life turned out to be even more difficult: money depreciated, it was hard to buy food and even the simplest medicine.

I read a lot about Israel. It was interesting for me to empathize. Neither Mother nor I admitted a thought to immigrate there. Who would need elderly and ill people in a foreign country?

In 1998 my husband broke his leg. He already suffered from Parkinson's disease. Then his sclerosis got worse, and he had memory loss. He became like a child, it was very difficult to look after him. There was nobody to help me. In 2000 he passed away. After the cremation, I buried the urn with his ashes close to my mother's in Vagankovskoye cemetery in Moscow.

Now I am sick, helpless and lonely. The charitable organization 'Yad Ezra' from Joint [27](#) has helped me a lot. When my husband was severely ill, there was a nurse who gave him injections, and bathed him. He also helped me, the helpless at that time. He brought us food. They have been



taking care of me since 1987. This organization gives me products monthly. A house-keeper lives with me. She cleans the apartment, does the laundry and cooks. The organization Joint does a very good job, and I am extremely grateful.

I am really worried about the large archive that I keep at home. There are my documents that used to belong to my parents, grandparents and their ancestors, their letters, pictures, and other belongings. This archive is the only precious thing I've got. I have kept all those things all my life, and now there is nobody I can bequeath it to. Nobody from my grand-nephews, mostly residing in France, knows anything about our family's history. They are not interested in the past. Some of the documents in this archive were given to the Sevastopol museum. But now it is a different state [Ukraine], and things are overly complicated.

- **Glossary:**

## **1 Black Sea Fleet**

A constituent part of the Russian Navy, it was founded in 1783 and took part in the Russian-Turkish wars in the 19th century. It played a very important role in World War I: over 180 various battleships pertained to it. They bombarded the coastal fortifications of the Central Power, such as Varna and the Bosphorus. In 1905 there were riots in battleship 'Potyomkin' and cruiser 'Chakov', which impacted Russian history further. Navy men not satisfied with the tsarist regime supported the Revolution of 1917 extensively. During World War II the navy took part in the defense of Sevastopol, Odessa, the northern Caucasus, Novorossiysk, the liberation of the Crimea, Nikolayev, Odessa and took part in the Iasi and Kishinev operations. After the war the Black Sea Fleet made enormous technical advance and complied with all international standards. The arsenal consisted of the most powerful carrier decks, nuclear war heads etc. After the break up of the Soviet Union (1991) Russia and the Ukraine commenced negotiations on the division of the Fleet and finally in 1995 a treaty was signed. As a result the larger part of the fleet was taken by Russia because the Ukraine was not willing to possess nuclear armament after 1991. At present both the Russian and the Ukrainian fleet are based in Sevastopol (on Ukrainian territory). According to the treaty the Russian navy is leasing the port until 2017; the Russian fleet is gradually being moved to Novorossiysk (port on Russian territory).

## **2 Crimean war (1853-1856)**

in many respects the first modern war in History. The Russian Empire with aspirations concerning the Balkans occupied the Ottoman principalities of Moldova and Walachia in July 1853. The great powers fearing from a Russian advance in the region and wanting to preserve the European equilibrium sided with the Ottoman Empire in the conflict: Great Britain and France declared war on Russia in March 1854. Although the Habsburg Empire remained neutral its threats to enter the war forced the Russians to evacuate the two Ottoman principalities and they were occupied by the Austrians. In September 1854 allied troops landed on the Crimea in order to capture Sevastopol, the major Russian Black Sea port. The Russians defended the city heroically for 11 months under the command of V. Kornilov and P. Nakhimov. Allied commanders were Lord Raglan for the British and Marshal Saint-Arnaud, succeeded later by Marshal Canrobert, for the French. Military operations, which were marked on both sides by great stubbornness, gallantry, and disregard for

casualties, remained localized. Famous episodes were the battles of Balaklava and Inkerman (1854) and the allied capture (1855) of Malakhov and Redan, which preceded the fall of Sevastopol. The accession (1855) of Tsar Alexander II and the capture of Sevastopol led to peace negotiations that resulted in the Treaty of Paris (February 1856). The Crimean war stopped Russian aspirations towards the Balkans and the Straits for another 22 years and rescued the position of the Ottoman Empire as a great power. It also resulted in spoiling the previously very good Habsburg-Russian relation.

### **3 Jewish Pale of Settlement**

Certain provinces in the Russian Empire were designated for permanent Jewish residence and the Jewish population was only allowed to live in these areas. The Pale was first established by a decree by Catherine II in 1791. The regulation was in force until the Russian Revolution of 1917, although the limits of the Pale were modified several times. The Pale stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, and 94% of the total Jewish population of Russia, almost 5 million people, lived there. The overwhelming majority of the Jews lived in the towns and shtetls of the Pale. Certain privileged groups of Jews, such as certain merchants, university graduates and craftsmen working in certain branches, were granted to live outside the borders of the Pale of Settlement permanently.

### **4 Russian Revolution of 1917**

Revolution in which the tsarist regime was overthrown in the Russian Empire and, under Lenin, was replaced by the Bolshevik rule. The two phases of the Revolution were: February Revolution, which came about due to food and fuel shortages during World War I, and during which the tsar abdicated and a provisional government took over. The second phase took place in the form of a coup led by Lenin in October/November (October Revolution) and saw the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

### **5 Great Patriotic War**

On 22nd June 1941 at 5 o'clock in the morning Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union without declaring war. This was the beginning of the so-called Great Patriotic War. The German blitzkrieg, known as Operation Barbarossa, nearly succeeded in breaking the Soviet Union in the months that followed. Caught unprepared, the Soviet forces lost whole armies and vast quantities of equipment to the German onslaught in the first weeks of the war. By November 1941 the German army had seized the Ukrainian Republic, besieged Leningrad, the Soviet Union's second largest city, and threatened Moscow itself. The war ended for the Soviet Union on 9th May 1945.

### **6 Forced deportation to Siberia**

Stalin introduced the deportation of certain people, like the Crimean Tatars and the Chechens, to Siberia. Without warning, people were thrown out of their houses and into vehicles at night. The majority of them died on the way of starvation, cold and illnesses.

### **7 Percent of Jews admitted to higher educational institutions**

In tsarist Russia the number of Jews in higher educational institutions could not exceed 5% of the

total number of students.

## **8 Karlovy Vary (German name**

Karlsbad): The most famous Bohemian spa, named after Bohemian King Charles (Karel) IV, who allegedly found the springs during a hunting expedition in 1358. It was one of the most popular resorts among the royalty and aristocracy in Europe for centuries.

## **9 Odessa**

A town in Ukraine on the Black Sea coast. One of the largest industrial, cultural, scholarly and resort centers in Ukraine. Founded in the 15th century in the place of the Tatar village Khadjibey. In 1764 the Turks built the fortress Eni-Dunia near that village. After the Russian-Turkish war in 1787-91 Odessa was taken by Russia and the town was officially renamed Odessa. Under the rule of Herzog Richelieu (1805-1814) Odessa became the chief town in Novorossiya province. On 17th January 1918 Soviet rule was established in the town. During World War II, from August - October 1941, the town defended itself heroically from the German attacks.

## **10 Gangs**

During the Russian Civil War there were all kinds of gangs in the Ukraine. Their members came from all the classes of former Russia, but most of them were peasants. Their leaders used political slogans to dress their criminal acts. These gangs were anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic. They killed Jews and burnt their houses, they robbed their houses, raped women and killed children.

## **11 Keep in touch with relatives abroad**

The authorities could arrest an individual corresponding with his/her relatives abroad and charge him/her with espionage, send them to concentration camp or even sentence them to death.

## **12 Communal apartment**

The Soviet power wanted to improve housing conditions by requisitioning 'excess' living space of wealthy families after the Revolution of 1917. Apartments were shared by several families with each family occupying one room and sharing the kitchen, toilet and bathroom with other tenants. Because of the chronic shortage of dwelling space in towns communal or shared apartments continued to exist for decades. Despite state programs for the construction of more houses and the liquidation of communal apartments, which began in the 1960s, shared apartments still exist today.

## **13 Famine in Ukraine**

In 1920 a deliberate famine was introduced in the Ukraine causing the death of millions of people. It was arranged in order to suppress those protesting peasants who did not want to join the collective farms. There was another dreadful deliberate famine in 1930-1934 in the Ukraine. The authorities took away the last food products from the peasants. People were dying in the streets, whole villages became deserted. The authorities arranged this specifically to suppress the rebellious peasants who did not want to accept Soviet power and join collective farms.

## **14 Rabfak**

Rabfak is an abbreviation for 'Rabotnicheski Fakultet' meaning Workers' Faculty. They were much popular in the 1970s and 1980s. They were organized with the cooperation of the Bulgarian Communist Party and their main goal was to prepare specialists to enroll in universities. The people were mostly from industrial companies. The courses lasted a number of months and people did not go to work while they were studying. The people sent to such courses had a good professional background and were recommended by party representatives. In socialist times such workers' schools were organized throughout the entire Eastern Block. Modes of instruction included both evening and correspondence classes and all educational levels were served - from elementary school to higher education.

## **15 Great Terror (1934-1938)**

During the Great Terror, or Great Purges, which included the notorious show trials of Stalin's former Bolshevik opponents in 1936-1938 and reached its peak in 1937 and 1938, millions of innocent Soviet citizens were sent off to labor camps or killed in prison. The major targets of the Great Terror were communists. Over half of the people who were arrested were members of the party at the time of their arrest. The armed forces, the Communist Party, and the government in general were purged of all allegedly dissident persons; the victims were generally sentenced to death or to long terms of hard labor. Much of the purge was carried out in secret, and only a few cases were tried in public 'show trials'. By the time the terror subsided in 1939, Stalin had managed to bring both the Party and the public to a state of complete submission to his rule. Soviet society was so atomized and the people so fearful of reprisals that mass arrests were no longer necessary. Stalin ruled as absolute dictator of the Soviet Union until his death in March 1953.

## **16 Enemy of the people**

Soviet official term; euphemism used for real or assumed political opposition.

## **17 Spanish Civil War (1936-39)**

A civil war in Spain, which lasted from July 1936 to April 1939, between rebels known as Nacionales and the Spanish Republican government and its supporters. The leftist government of the Spanish Republic was besieged by nationalist forces headed by General Franco, who was backed by Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Though it had Spanish nationalist ideals as the central cause, the war was closely watched around the world mainly as the first major military contest between left-wing forces and the increasingly powerful and heavily armed fascists. The number of people killed in the war has been long disputed ranging between 500,000 and a million.

## **18 Mandatory job assignment in the USSR**

Graduates of higher educational institutions had to complete a mandatory 2-year job assignment issued by the institution from which they graduated. After finishing this assignment young people were allowed to get employment at their discretion in any town or organization.

## **19 NKVD**

(Russ.: Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del), People's Committee of Internal Affairs, the supreme security authority in the USSR - the secret police. Founded by Lenin in 1917, it nevertheless played an insignificant role until 1934, when it took over the GPU (the State Political Administration), the political police. The NKVD had its own police and military formations, and also possessed the powers to pass sentence on political matters, and as such in practice had total control over society. Under Stalin's rule the NKVD was the key instrument used to terrorize the civilian population. The NKVD ran a network of labor camps for millions of prisoners, the Gulag. The heads of the NKVD were as follows: Genrikh Yagoda (to 1936), Nikolai Yezhov (to 1938) and Lavrenti Beria. During the war against Germany the political police, the KGB, was spun off from the NKVD. After the war it also operated on USSR-occupied territories, including in Poland, where it assisted the nascent communist authorities in suppressing opposition. In 1946 the NKVD was renamed the Ministry of the Interior.

## **20 Residence permit**

The Soviet authorities restricted freedom of travel within the USSR through the residence permit and kept everybody's whereabouts under control. Every individual in the USSR needed residential registration; this was a stamp in the passport giving the permanent address of the individual. It was impossible to find a job, or even to travel within the country, without such a stamp. In order to register at somebody else's apartment one had to be a close relative and if each resident of the apartment had at least 8 square meters to themselves.

## **21 Ispolkom**

After the tsar's abdication (March, 1917), power passed to a Provisional Government appointed by a temporary committee of the Duma, which proposed to share power to some extent with councils of workers and soldiers known as 'soviets'. Following a brief and chaotic period of fairly democratic procedures, a mixed body of socialist intellectuals known as the Ispolkom secured the right to 'represent' the soviets. The democratic credentials of the soviets were highly imperfect to begin with: peasants - the overwhelming majority of the Russian population - had virtually no say, and soldiers were grossly over-represented. The Ispolkom's assumption of power turned this highly imperfect democracy into an intellectuals' oligarchy.

## **22 Mikhoels, Solomon (1890-1948) (born Vovsi)**

Great Soviet actor, producer and pedagogue. He worked in the Moscow State Jewish Theater (and was its art director from 1929). He directed philosophical, vivid and monumental works. Mikhoels was murdered by order of the State Security Ministry.

## **23 Campaign against 'cosmopolitans'**

The campaign against 'cosmopolitans', i.e. Jews, was initiated in articles in the central organs of the Communist Party in 1949. The campaign was directed primarily at the Jewish intelligentsia and it was the first public attack on Soviet Jews as Jews. 'Cosmopolitans' writers were accused of hating



the Russian people, of supporting Zionism, etc. Many Yiddish writers as well as the leaders of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were arrested in November 1948 on charges that they maintained ties with Zionism and with American 'imperialism'. They were executed secretly in 1952. The anti-Semitic Doctors' Plot was launched in January 1953. A wave of anti-Semitism spread through the USSR. Jews were removed from their positions, and rumors of an imminent mass deportation of Jews to the eastern part of the USSR began to spread. Stalin's death in March 1953 put an end to the campaign against 'cosmopolitans.'

## **24 Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAC)**

Formed in Kuibyshev in April 1942, the organization was meant to serve the interests of Soviet foreign policy and the Soviet military through media propaganda, as well as through personal contacts with Jews abroad, especially in Britain and the United States. The chairman of the JAC was Solomon Mikhoels, a famous actor and director of the Moscow Yiddish State Theater. A year after its establishment, the JAC was moved to Moscow and became one of the most important centers of Jewish culture and Yiddish literature until the German occupation. The JAC broadcast pro-Soviet propaganda to foreign audiences several times a week, telling them of the absence of anti-Semitism and of the great anti-Nazi efforts being made by the Soviet military. In 1948, Mikhoels was assassinated by Stalin's secret agents, and, as part of a newly-launched official anti-Semitic campaign, the JAC was disbanded in November and most of its members arrested.

## **25 Doctors' Plot**

The Doctors' Plot was an alleged conspiracy of a group of Moscow doctors to murder leading government and party officials. In January 1953, the Soviet press reported that nine doctors, six of whom were Jewish, had been arrested and confessed their guilt. As Stalin died in March 1953, the trial never took place. The official paper of the Party, the Pravda, later announced that the charges against the doctors were false and their confessions obtained by torture. This case was one of the worst anti-Semitic incidents during Stalin's reign. In his secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 Khrushchev stated that Stalin wanted to use the Plot to purge the top Soviet leadership.

## **26 Perestroika (Russian for restructuring)**

Soviet economic and social policy of the late 1980s, associated with the name of Soviet politician Mikhail Gorbachev. The term designated the attempts to transform the stagnant, inefficient command economy of the Soviet Union into a decentralized, market-oriented economy. Industrial managers and local government and party officials were granted greater autonomy, and open elections were introduced in an attempt to democratize the Communist Party organization. By 1991, perestroika was declining and was soon eclipsed by the dissolution of the USSR.

## **27 Joint (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee)**

The Joint was formed in 1914 with the fusion of three American Jewish committees of assistance, which were alarmed by the suffering of Jews during World War I. In late 1944, the Joint entered Europe's liberated areas and organized a massive relief operation. It provided food for Jewish survivors all over Europe, it supplied clothing, books and school supplies for children. It supported

cultural amenities and brought religious supplies for the Jewish communities. The Joint also operated DP camps, in which it organized retraining programs to help people learn trades that would enable them to earn a living, while its cultural and religious activities helped re-establish Jewish life. The Joint was also closely involved in helping Jews to emigrate from Europe and from Muslim countries. The Joint was expelled from East Central Europe for decades during the Cold War and it has only come back to many of these countries after the fall of communism. Today the Joint provides social welfare programs for elderly Holocaust survivors and encourages Jewish renewal and communal development.